

New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority

Chair: Peter Burling

Vice Chair: Katherine Hersh

Minutes

February 25, 2011

10:00 am

Manchester Boston Regional Airport

Conference Room, 2nd floor

Present: Vice-Chair Kathy Hersh, Mark Brewer, Kerrie Diers (by phone), David Preece, Mike Izbicki, Nancy Larson, Jay Minkarah, Kit Morgan, Tim Moore, Mike Tardiff

- I. Call to Order -10:10
- II. Public Input – None
- III. Minutes
Tim Moore made a motion to approve the minutes of January 28, 2011, seconded by David Preece. The motion was approved unanimously.
- IV. HB 218
 - a. Status – Kathy Hersh summarized the status of HB218. The House Transportation Committee took over three hours of public testimony on February 1. She checked with the committee and was told that the bill would be taken up in executive session the week of the 21st. However, the Committee acted on the bill a week earlier and voted to pass it 11-5. There have been a number of articles in the paper regarding the vote and the process the committee used to take the vote. The Bill has not been scheduled to go to the House floor as of yet.
 - b. Next Steps – Hersh introduced Chris Williams and Mike Skelton of the Nashua and Manchester Chambers of Commerce. Williams reported that he has been meeting with members of the Nashua delegation regarding the need for the NHRTA to continue its work. The Nashua delegation requested that the vote be postponed until more questions could be answered. They estimate that it would be postponed for about two weeks.

The Chambers encourage every group supporting the NHRTA to make phone calls and send letters. It is very important to let members of the leadership to see how important this is to people.

Hersh thanked Williams and Skelton for their efforts and tremendous support. She added that this is as much as we know so far. The UNH Survey is important to get out there as well.

New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority

David Preece suggested that everyone send out press releases regarding the survey. Hersh will also post the letters of support on the web.

V. NH Capitol Corridor Updates

- a. Schedule – Kit Morgan provided an update on the NHCC. The notice that the Alternatives Analysis RFP will be coming soon is now on the website. Requests for Letters of interest should be posted on website within 2 weeks. There will be a 4 week response timeframe. The FTA grant has been entered into the grant system. Region 1 will review the scope, ask questions and then release the grant funds. The FRA grant has a resolution that rescinds funding not obligated. This would affect the FRA funds that NH had been awarded. The FTA funds should not be affected by this resolution.

Hersh asked if all the projects in New England were affected by this. Morgan stated that the projects that are not obligated both construction and planning would be affected.

- b. Match – The match for the grants is included in the State capital budget. The DOT Commissioner met with the Fiscal Committee and was told that the legislature needed to change the prior language. Tim Moore asked if the new language is in there.

Hersh stated that the State could not have accepted funds or entered into an agreement until the FRA funds were included in the budget. The 2012 capital budget can include the change to the footnote. Kit will check on the status of this.

Jay Minkarah suggested that we need to be clear that the NHRTA has not used state funds, but that the project requires match to proceed.

- VI. Plaistow update – Tim Moore stated that the project was awarded CMAQ funds, with \$2.3 million available immediately for current expenditures. The Board of Selectmen needs to accept the grant and then the Legislature needs to approve the Federal funds received. The Selectmen are mostly supportive. There is a \$25,000 loss in tax revenue that will need to be replaced. There is a lot more work to do on that issue. Next steps include proceeding on the environmental assessment, negotiate with MBTA regarding their commitment, and get the RFPs ready. Mike Izbicki attended a meeting to discuss specifications. Kit Morgan stated that the Selectmen in Atkinson established a committee to investigate the rail siting. They have a number of questions and concerns about the location of the layover facilities.

VII. Outreach

- a. Resolutions – Nashua, Merrimack, Bedford have passed resolutions. Manchester has an old one from a few years ago.
- b. Presentations – NEPTA will have an update on the NHCC, as well as NARP regional meeting. Larson suggested that the OEP conference might also be a venue, or the LGC conference.
- c. UNH Study – Press releases went out and are posted on the web.

New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority

- d. Marketing piece – No action yet

VIII. Other Discussion

- a. Enfield bridge project – resolution tabled
- b. Other – State Rail Plan: there will be a Technical Advisory Committee. Carol Morris from the consultants will be in touch with people to invite them to the committee. The NHRTA should identify a few people to represent the authority. David Preece, Tim Moore and Nancy Larson volunteered to represent the authority. The TAC will meet about 3 times during the process.
- c. Agreement has been reached between the MBTA and Pan AM. This has not yet been made public. We should draft a resolution thanking the MassDOT for their efforts or acknowledge their work in some way. Perhaps we should do a joint press release.
This was the biggest issue remaining and a major stumbling block in previous projects. This is a huge step forward for us. There is the opportunity for a seamless extension from Lowell to Concord. Is there any way to get a copy of the agreement? Can Kit obtain it for us?
- d. Peter Griffin suggested that the NHRTA keep an eye on the St. Johnsbury connection. David Preece agreed that we should stay on top of this connection to Montreal.
- e. Mark Brewer announced that Mark Gary of Southwest Airlines will be at Southern NH University on March 23 and will be available for question and answer session. It might be good for members of the NHRTA to attend. You can register on line.

IX. Non-public session - none

- X. Adjourn – Kathy Hersh thanked Mark Brewer for hosting the meeting at the Manchester Boston Regional Airport.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kerrie Diers, NHRTA Secretary